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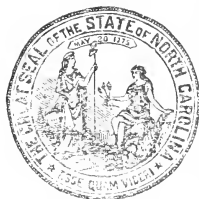
GREAT EVENTS IN  
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY

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WAS ALAMANCE THE FIRST  
BATTLE OF THE REVOLUTION?

BY

MRS. L. A. MCCORKLE.



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THE  
NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET

"CAROLINA! CAROLINA! HEAVEN'S BLESSINGS ATTEND HER!  
WHILE WE LIVE WE WILL CHERISH, PROTECT AND DEFEND HER."

RALEIGH  
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## PREFACE.

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The object of the NORTH CAROLINA BOOKLET is to erect a suitable memorial to the patriotic women who composed the "Edenton Tea Party."

These stout-hearted women are every way worthy of admiration. On October 25, 1774, seven months before the defiant farmers of Mecklenburg had been aroused to the point of signing their Declaration of Independence, nearly twenty months before the declaration made by the gentlemen composing the Vestry of St. Paul's Church, Edenton, nearly two years before Jefferson penned the immortal National Declaration, these daring women solemnly subscribed to a document affirming that they would use no article taxed by England. Their example fostered in the whole State a determination to die, or to be free.

In beginning this new series, the Daughters of the Revolution desire to express their most cordial thanks to the former competent and untiringly faithful Editors, and to ask for the new management the hearty support of all who are interested in the brave deeds, high thought, and lofty lives of the North Carolina of the olden days.

MRS. D. H. HILL.

## ALAMANCE.

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1771.

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The following poem by Seymour Whiting should be memorized by every child in North Carolina. When this poem was written no monument had been placed on the old battle-ground. The monument which now marks the spot was erected in 1880.

No stately column marks the hallowed place  
Where silent sleeps, unurned, their sacred dust—  
The first free martyrs of a glorious race,  
Their fame a people's wealth, a nation's trust.

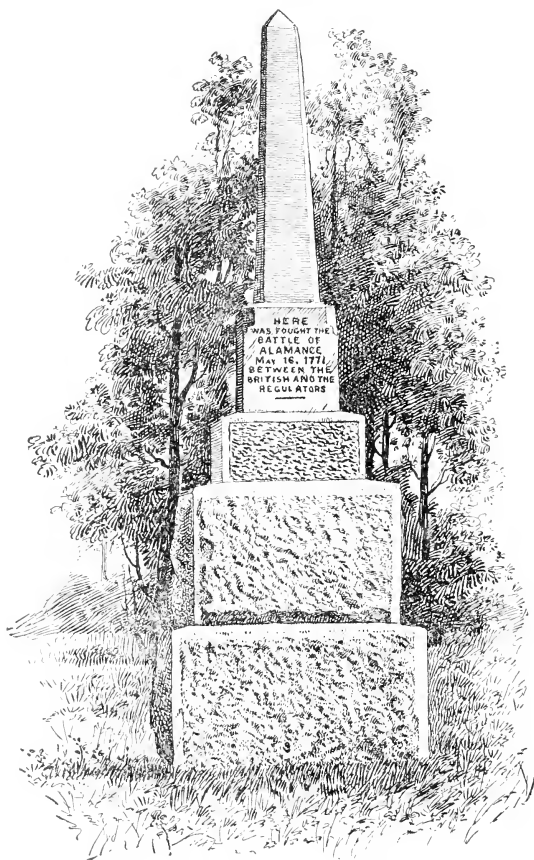
Above their rest the golden harvest waves,  
The glorious stars stand sentinel on high,  
While in sad requiem near their turfless graves  
The winding river murmurs moaning by.

But holier watchers here their vigils keep  
Than storied urn or monumental stone;  
For Law and Justice guard their dreamless sleep,  
And Plenty smiles above their bloody home.

Immortal youth shall crown their deathless fame,  
And as their country's glories still advance,  
Shall brighter glow, o'er all the earth thy name,  
Our first-fought field of freedom—Alamance!







MONUMENT ON ALAMANCE BATTLE-GROUND.

# WAS ALAMANCE THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE REVOLUTION?

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BY LUTIE ANDREWS MCCORKLE,

Author of "Old-time Stories of the Old North State."

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"Constructive historical work deserves and gets more credit than does destructive work. To overthrow the idols of our forefathers is considered akin to sacrilege; but the time is come when we are compelled to bow our heads and acknowledge that some of our forefathers were as great rascals as some of us."

This remarkable paragraph introduces an article entitled "Regulators in a New Light," which appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* of January 25, 1903. While few of us, I trust, are willing to admit the "soft impeachment" of being rascals ourselves, fewer still, doubtless, are willing to accord this distinction to their forefathers, and say in earnest what Burns said in jest:

"My ancient but ignoble blood  
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."

"The average history of Revolutionary events," our enlightened critic goes on to say, "gives but one side of the question, and even that side is whitewashed." After such a bold announcement, we are not surprised by the recklessness with

which the writer proceeds in his "destructive work." That he succeeds in showing the Regulators in a "new light" is unquestionable; but that it is a true light will at least admit of some degree of doubt.

Such sweeping assertions as these arraign a formidable array of writers of eminent talent as men incompetent, by reason of carelessness and partiality, to perform the tasks which they undertook. Bancroft, Lossing, Hawks, Wheeler, Swain and Graham were not only men of recognized ability, but were untiring, painstaking, conscientious seekers after truth. With one accord they believed and stoutly maintained that "the first blood shed in battle with the troops of the English government in support of the principles of the American Revolution was the blood of North Carolinians, and the first battlefield was the soil of that State" at Alamance. They had pursued their investigations under a profound sense of their duty to preserve the history of their country for the instruction of future generations, and they gave the results of their inquiries to the public as truth, to be cherished with honest pride by every patriotic American. Now it is charged that theirs was "constructive work"—the construction of an idol to be worshiped by a credulous people, and that it now becomes the bounden duty of the destructive critics of this generation to demolish this idol in the interest of historic certainty.

The causes of the Regulation movement, culminating in the battle of Alamance, it is alleged, were "ignorance and vengeance on one side and vanity and error on the other." The "flagrant and unjustifiable wrongs" under which the people

groaned are thus laughed to scorn, and the patriots of 1771 are represented as the dupes of a cowardly demagogue who was using his influence to avenge personal grievances.

Possibly no two facts in American history have been more doubted and discussed, and in consequence more indisputably proven, than that the battle of Alamance was the first battle, and the Mecklenburg Declaration the first declaration of independence in the revolt of the colonies against the Crown of England. The latter was the natural sequence of the former. And yet, just as during the Wars of the Roses, there were patriotic Englishmen who sided with the house of York, and others with the house of Lancaster; as during the Protectorate there were patriots both among the Roundheads and among the Cavaliers; as during the Revolution some good men sided with England against their own countrymen, believing Toryism to be a religious virtue; as during the war between the States there were conscientious Unionists who fought in the Federal army against their own neighbors and kindred; so for the last century there have been among us two parties—the one believing, the other refusing to believe, in the patriotism of the heroes of Alamance and in the authenticity of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

By far the ablest and best equipped advocate of the “destructive theory” in the former instance is Mr. Francis Nash of Hillsboro, N. C. In a most interesting and admirably written paper on “Hillsboro: Colonial and Revolutionary,” he essays to prove that the organization known as the Regulators was “an ignorant, headstrong populace,” “all criminals

in a common riot," moved by "imaginary grievances," and led by "an unscrupulous fomentor of strife," who has since been elevated as a "sentimental hero." He would have us believe that the battle so long regarded by our people with patriotic pride as the "first fought field of freedom" was "little more than a neighborhood riot," and denounces the assertion that "the same spirit inspired the Regulators that inspired the Sons of Liberty or the Lexington Minute Men" as "sentimental slush." The battle of Alamance he would have us believe was but "the after-clap of a disgraceful riot." Himself the descendant, if I mistake not, of a gentleman who was a victim of one of the few outrages charged against any of the Regulators, their self-assumed title a stench in the nostrils of his family for more than a century, Mr. Nash shows somewhat of the unreasoning spirit of hereditary prejudice, and writes with a zeal worthy of a better cause. I am persuaded that he is not just in his denunciation of the Regulators, albeit they may have been unduly prejudiced against that Francis Nash whose honored name he bears and whose patriotic blood flows in his veins.

Mr. Nash has undertaken to overthrow the position on this question of many men whose testimony is incontrovertible, and seeks to break the force of documentary evidence that is overwhelming in its mass and conclusiveness. Whatever may be said of Hawks, Wheeler, Swain and Graham on the score of hereditary bias and local prejudice as being natives of North Carolina, the same weakness cannot be charged to Bancroft, Caruthers, Lossing and Foote, all of whom are a unit in their

conclusions in the premises. These men were natives of other States, and, with the exception of Bancroft, they all visited the scenes they described and gathered the facts, not only from documentary evidence that had been handed down from colonial times, but in great part from men who witnessed or participated in the battle and in the events preceding. Thus, it is seen they had at their command not only the records to which Mr. Nash appeals so confidently, but the testimony of men who were able to communicate the facts at first hand. Not a few of these, it may be added, were Presbyterians, to whose testimony, as it will be shown presently, Mr. Nash is himself disposed to defer on all occasions.

The statements of Bancroft, in his "History of the United States," edition of 1854, are for the most part quotations from the letters of Governors Tryon and Martin to Lord Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and from cotemporary publications in Philadelphia, New York and Boston. This great historian tells us that he had a very full collection of papers bearing on the Regulators, and he declares that "the blood of rebels against oppression was first shed on the branches of the Cape Fear river." Nor is the opinion of Dr. Caruthers to be despised. He lived for forty years in the section which had been the storm center of the Regulation movement, being the immediate successor of Dr. David Caldwell as pastor of the historic churches of Alamance and Buffalo. He gathered many of his facts from "old men of great respectability, who were then living and remembered the former times." When he used verbal testimony he "took pains

to get an account of the same thing from different persons or from the same person at different times, for the purpose of comparing them together and ascertaining the truth." And he tells us that "the Regulation is now regarded by our greatest men as the very germ of the Revolution in this State." Dr. Hawks tells us he lived "where the spot on which the Regulators were hanged met his eye every day," and declares that "God made the flower of freedom grow out of the turf that covered these men's graves." He also had a personal acquaintance with cotemporaries of those who laid down their lives at Alamance.

The Regulators were, in Mr. Nash's opinion, "an ignorant, headstrong, lawless populace," as they were regarded by Edmund Fanning and his associates. In this view, however, he is not sustained by the testimony of men of eminent character who were associated with some of the Regulators. Dr. Caruthers tells us "there were many men in most of the upper counties engaged in that affair who were then, as their descendants are now, among the most sensible, upright and respectable people in the country. Most of them had enjoyed the advantages of a Christian training, and at that time had the ministrations of able and devoted men. The parishioners of such men as McAden, Caldwell, Balch, Craighead and others were probably something more than semi-barbarians and were not likely to be an unprincipled and lawless rabble, but many from these congregations were not only united with the mass of the Regulators in their addresses and petitions and all their legal methods of obtaining a redress for their



grievances, but were actually engaged in the battle." He says further: "Those [of the Regulators] who lived in the region in which I have been acquainted seem to have been regarded as honorable in all the relations of life, and were much esteemed as men and citizens."

Dr. Foote, like Dr. Caruthers, spent years in the section involved in this disturbance, and enjoyed a personal acquaintance with the immediate descendants of the Regulators. "The descendants of these people," he writes, "who were at the time treated as rebels and stigmatized in government papers as ignorant and headstrong and unprincipled, hold the first rank in their country for probity and intelligence, have held the first offices in their own and in the two younger and neighboring States, and have not been debarred the highest offices in the Union."

Mr. Nash himself admits that the four men whose names we have of the six who paid the penalty of their patriotism on the gallows at Hillsboro did not answer the description "lawless and ignorant." James Pugh made a manly defense of his course in the speech he delivered on the gallows, rebuking Tryon for dereliction in duty, and "advised him to put away his corrupt clerks and tax-gatherers and be a friend of the people." Benjamin Merrill "was an honest, upright man." Of Robert Matear "little is known"; but against the statement of Caruthers that "he with Thompson had never taken any part in any riot and was a Regulator only in sympathy," Mr. Nash thinks the fact conclusive that "he was convicted at Hillsboro and executed, though six other convicts

were respited and afterwards pardoned." Surely Matear must have been "ignorant and lawless," since his character and record were not such as to commend him to the mercy of that humane Governor who refused to listen to the Regulators and shot down Robert Thompson, an unarmed man, with his own hand! Messer's integrity may be judged from the fact that he was permitted to leave the State in search of Hermon Husband, having promised to return and suffer himself to be executed if he could not bring Husband back. He failed in his effort and returned in due time to die for his offense. Many others who were numbered with the Regulators, such as Thomas Person, Colonel Bryan and Captain Raleigh Sutherland, were men of "unimpeachable character." If Mr. Nash is correct in saying that at that time "the most moral communities in the whole section were those over which a few Presbyterian ministers held sway and exerted an influence for good," then the weight of evidence seems to be against his position, for we are told that "a large proportion of the men in Dr. Caldwell's congregation were Regulators." True, Dr. Caldwell's letter to Tryon, in which he declares that the people of his congregation are not in sympathy with the Regulators, is often quoted; but those who make use of this letter for the purpose of discrediting the Regulation movement invariably fail to state that it was written in 1766, five years before the battle of Alamance, and at a time when Dr. Caldwell himself was a comparative stranger in that section, having settled there only the previous year. In the five succeeding years he and his flock had ample occasion

and opportunity to change their minds, and it is certain they did. Besides, "the people of Orange and equally of Rowan and Mecklenburg were unanimous in their resolutions to claim relief from the Governor." So we find "the most moral communities in that section" engaged in the contest; for the congregations of McAden, Caldwell, Balch and Craighead, who, to use Mr. Nash's phrase, "held sway and exerted an influence for good," extended over this section. Dr. Hawks tells us that "when the final struggle came every one of these spiritual guides, to a man, was on the side of an oppressed people." Even Hermon Husband, who figures in the pungent periods of our destructive critics as "a selfish stirrer-up of turmoil, a fomentor of strife," seems to have been regarded as a man of some character by those who knew him, Clerk Fanning and the Hillsboro lawyers excepted. Says Caruthers: "I have conversed with a number who knew him personally and intimately in their youth, as they were neighbors, some of whom are yet living, and they all speak of him as a man of strict integrity and as a firm and sincere advocate of what he considered the rights of mankind. When people find they have been deceived by a man who has courted their favor merely for some selfish end, they usually turn against him, but this was not the case with the people he represented." Dr. Caldwell thought, as Caruthers was assured by the family of that distinguished patriot and divine, "that Husband was a little headstrong and impetuous, but he believed him to be honest in his intentions." It is known that Husband was a personal friend and relative of Benja-

min Franklin, from whom at various times he received messages and pamphlets. Although Husband, bred a Quaker and deprecating all bloodshed as contrary to the law of Christ, fled at the first gun at Alamance, it appears by no means unreasonable that from Franklin he may have derived many of his opinions, and that, though desiring a peaceful solution of every difficulty, he may have been actuated by motives as pure as were the motives of those who afterwards laid down their lives for the cause of liberty. Very certain it is that the agitation begun by the Regulators had made good headway in Granville and Halifax, as well as in Orange and the more western counties, some time before Husband took a hand in it. Think what we may of his conduct at Alamance and afterwards, we are, in strict justice, compelled to accord him the verdict of contemporary public opinion. And while we would make no "sentimental hero" of him, we have no right to attribute to him selfish and vengeful motives.

Mr. Nash does not discuss the "causes leading up to the War of the Regulation, except as they affect the history of colonial Hillsboro." Having thus left out of view a large part of the facts bearing on our question, he persuades himself, and would persuade others, that the whole movement was contemptible in its origin and spirit, and that Alamance was only the "after-clap" of what all must admit was a "disgraceful riot." Conceding all the facts alleged as to the riot at Hillsboro, we are by no means compelled to regard Alamance as the "after-clap" of that unfortunate affair, and much less are we required to admit that the men of Alamance were men

of another spirit than that which animated the Sons of Liberty and the Minute Men of Lexington. The truth is, the disturbances around Hillsboro were but the temporary out-flashings of a spirit of deep resentment against corrupt officials which pervaded the whole piedmont section of the colony, and was felt even on the distant sea-board. Before the Stamp Act bred defiance in the east, the people of the middle counties had long been groaning under the exactions of the officers of the law, and simultaneously, though without concert of action, "pleading in the anguish of their souls" for deliverance from the extortions and abuses of power under which they suffered. It would hardly be possible for discontent so widespread not to evoke some lawlessness. When men bred to count themselves freemen have seen law disregarded and justice trampled under foot, what wonder if they fail to respect the law and its officers? When wise heads are convinced that foul wrong is being done without rebuke, hot heads will sometimes plot hasty vengeance.

And what more natural than that the Regulators should have cherished an "especial antipathy toward Hillsboro"? It was a very small village, chiefly known to them as the home of Edmund Fanning, whose abuses of the law had made him odious to the people; as the home of the lawyers who justified and defended him, making his cause their own, and as the seat of a court in which a judge had flaunted his contempt for a long-suffering people in their faces by fining the chief culprit a penny and costs when convicted of extortion on six counts. Goaded by a sense of outrage, some of these

men, in an outburst of indignation, undertook to "administer wild justice" after their own fashion. But it is a well known fact that these outrages, instead of being excused as the "overflow of exuberant patriotism," as Mr. Nash would have us believe, were deplored and "condemned by the great body of Regulators." Because a small number of rude "fellows of the baser sort" were guilty of lawless conduct in one neighborhood, it is neither in accord with "historic truth" nor with historic justice to hold the entire body responsible for such conduct, and much less is it right on that account to impugn the motives of all those men of piedmont North Carolina who for ten long years waged a fight for their liberties. This was precisely the uncharity of Governor Tryon, according to the testimony of his successor.

But in referring to the "so-called extortions practiced upon the people," Mr. Nash concedes that "the charges of public officers were *in some instances* oppressive"; and yet, in his evident anxiety to establish confidence in Tryon's view of the "discreet and steady behavior of Colonel Fanning," and to relieve his character from unjust aspersion, he tells us that on certain papers Fanning "was entitled to a charge of eight shillings, whereas he made a rule, out of abundance of caution, to charge only six shillings." It is matter of well attested fact also that, "out of abundance of caution," to re-imburse himself for occasional generosity and keep his famous wine cellar well filled, Colonel Fanning was wont to charge \$15 for a marriage license, for which the law allowed him but one dollar.

Governor Josiah Martin, who succeeded Tryon very soon after the battle of Alamance, was undoubtedly in a position to know whereof he spoke. After spending some months in and around Hillsboro, he wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough, Secretary of State for the Colonies, as follows:

“NORTH CAROLINA, HILLSBOROUGH,

“August 30, 1772.

. . . “My progress through this country, my Lord, hath opened my eyes exceedingly with respect to the commotions and discontents that have lately prevailed in it. I now see most clearly that they have been provoked by insolence, and cruel advantage taken of the people’s ignorance by mercenary, tricking attorneys, clerks and other little officers, who have practised upon them every sort of rapine and extortion, by which, having brought upon themselves their just resentment,” etc.

Referring to this letter of Governor Martin, and also to the petition of the people of Orange to Chief Justice Howard and his associates, Bancroft says: “The people had no respite from the insolence of mercenary attorneys and officers, and were subjected to every sort of rapine and extortion. The courts of law offered no redress. At the inferior courts the justices, who themselves were implicated in the pilfering of public money, named the juries. The sheriff and receivers of taxes were in arrears for near seventy thousand pounds which they had extorted from the people and of which more than two-thirds had been irretrievably embezzled.” In 1769 Governor Tryon himself wrote to the Assembly:

“The fact is too well known to admit of a denial, that in a long course of years past great sums of the public money have

been lost by the negligence or insolvency of sheriffs and other collectors with their sureties. And it is presumed that in the same course of time considerable sums have sunk after they were lodged in the public treasury, whereof no account has hitherto been made."

Were it needful to add anything to these statements, we could rely upon the facts mentioned by Bancroft, that the petition of the Regulators was signed by about five hundred men and was fortified "with a precise specification of acts of extortion, confirmed in each instance by oath." He had in his possession a copy of that petition, with its signatures.

Against all this mass of evidence, conclusive to any unprejudiced mind, Mr. Nash brings up the address presented to Governor Tryon in the Assembly of 1770 by Robert Howe, Samuel Johnston, Maurice Moore, Cornelius Harnett, Abner Nash, Joseph Hewes and Edmund Fanning, in which they "condemn without stint both the motives and the acts of the Regulators." As these men, with the exception of Fanning, were afterwards "distinguished patriots," Mr. Nash would have us consider their opinion conclusive as to the status of the Regulators. But he fails to tell us that these men, except Joseph Hewes, were all lawyers, and, Fanning only excepted, all from the eastern part of the province. The fight of the Regulators had all along been largely against the lawyers. They had plainly stated in one of their protests: "It is not our form or mode of government, nor yet our laws, that we are quarreling with, but with the malpractice of the officers of our County Court, and the abuse we suffer from those who



are empowered to manage our public affairs." Can we wonder if the acts of mercenary individuals had brought odium upon the whole profession? Nor can we forget that the people of the sea-board had not felt the heavy hand of extortion as the poor farmers of the interior had felt it. The Governor residing in the east, the officers of the law would be held in check there and would hardly dare to practice the oppressions that were common in more remote regions. Besides, the east had been longer settled and was more prosperous through its flourishing commerce with the outside world, while in the interior there was little either of coin or currency, the people subsisting solely upon their small crops, and their trade being chiefly barter. Hence, men from the east were hardly prepared to appreciate the motives (even though they may at a later period have followed the good example) of the Regulators in fighting "for the liberties they had inherited."

The Regulators, says Mr. Nash, "demanded that dishonest public officials should be removed and punished; and Governor Tryon not complying with their demand so summarily as they desired, they, inspired by hatred and revenge, proceeded to administer this punishment themselves. So they were an organized but irresponsible and uncontrollable mob—not a great people in the throes of a struggle for independence."

Were the Regulators a mob? Let them answer for themselves. "We tell you, in the anguish of our souls," they said to Governor Tryon, "we cannot go to law with our powerful

antagonists; that step, whenever taken, will terminate in the ruin of ourselves and families." They had had experience with lawyers and had grown wiser because of that sad experience. "That is all we want," they said to the Governor's secretary—"liberty to make our grievances known," so confident were they of the righteousness of their cause. This, surely, is not the unreasoning spirit of a mob. Their determination, as set forth in resolutions adopted at one of their earlier meetings, was:

"1st. That we will pay no more taxes until we are satisfied that they are agreeable to law and applied to purposes therein mentioned, unless we cannot help it or are forced to it.

"2d. That we will pay no officer any more fees than the law allows," etc.

Again, let Governor Martin, who seems honestly desirous to deal fairly by them, answer in their behalf. The "tricking attorneys, clerks and other little officers," he writes to the Earl of Hillsborough, in the letter already mentioned, had "engaged government in their defense by artful misrepresentations, that the vengeance the wretched people in folly and madness aimed at their heads was directed against the Constitution; and by this stratagem they threw an odium upon the injured people that by degrees begot a prejudice which precluded a full discovery of their grievances. Thus, my Lord, as far as I have been able to discover, the resentment of government was craftily worked up against the oppressed, and the protection which the oppressors treacherously acquired, where the injured and ignorant people expected to

find it, drove (some of them) to acts of desperation and confederated them in violence, which, as your Lordship knows, induced bloodshed; and, I verily believe, necessarily." In the adroit special pleading of Mr. Nash, the craft and strata-gem of Fanning is being repeated in this year of grace 1903.

The Regulators, says Bancroft, "asked no more than that extortioners be brought to fair trials and the collectors of public money called to proper settlement of their accounts." Tryon made promises, only to break them, until they found to their sorrow that "his Excellency was determined not to lend a kind ear to the just complaints of the people." And such was the craft and cunning of Fanning and the lawyers who aided and abetted his rascalities that the Regulators were doomed to disappointment in their sanguine "hope that naked truth and native ignorance would poise the superexcellent flourishes and consummate declamation of their powerful adversary." Certain it is, however, that something more than the "superexcellent flourishes" of Mr. Nash's specious argument will be needed to "poise" the right of the men of Alamance to be regarded as patriots contending for their liberties. History has given its verdict, and that verdict is not likely to be changed by the arguments of those whose methods and animus compel them to become the apologists of Fanning and of Tryon.

Mocked in the courts, stigmatized as "outlaws and rebels," again and again deceived by the royal Governor, these men whom Mr. Nash denounces as a "lawless and irresponsible mob" *twice* retired quietly to their homes on receiving a mere

promise of redress—once when they had gathered seven hundred strong at Hillsboro, and again when five hundred of them had assembled at Salisbury. Here again we do not find any spirit of irresponsibility and lawlessness.

Nor were they men of lawless and cowardly spirit who, without a leader and in large part unarmed, stood before Tryon at Alamance, desiring naught but permission to present to him a respectful petition laying before him in ample detail all their grievances, “in full hope and confidence of being redressed by him.” To have submitted to his peremptory and insulting demands would have been to exhibit the cringing spirit of slaves. So, with the courage of martyrs, those of them who were armed stood their ground when Tryon precipitately began the battle. Thus was given, as Caruthers says, “the first expression of the principles and spirit which covered the men of ’76 with immortal honor.”

When Captain Raleigh Sutherland, coming with a force from Surry to help the Regulators, wept on hearing from a distance the guns of Alamance, because he was not there with his countrymen “who were shedding their blood in defense of their rights,” he was animated by the same spirit which led General Francis Nash to say, with his dying breath, on the field of Germantown, “From the first dawn of Revolution I have been on the side of liberty and my country.” The difference was, that Sutherland was first to recognize that dawn of Liberty’s day.

But it is urged that the men of Alamance were not fighting British troops, and that they were not fighting for inde-

pendence. As to the first quibble, it is sufficient to state that they were fighting the same sort of a force that suffered defeat at the hands of Shelby and Cleveland at King's Mountain—colonial militia, flying the British flag and led by officers who represented the British crown. As to the second, the same argument would prove that Lexington was not a battle of the Revolution at all, and that in fact the Revolution did not commence until July, 1776. The truth is, none of the colonists at first desired independence. The common demand of all was redress of grievances. Only thirty-seven days before the battle of Lexington, John Adams declared "that there are any who pant after independence is the greatest slander on the province."

Once more, it is said that the men of Alamance did not come thither expecting to fight. Neither did the men of Lexington. We are told that "the night preceding the outrage at Lexington there were not fifty people in the colony that ever expected any blood would be shed in the contest." The patriots of Alamance were stigmatized as rebels, and suffered the spoiling of their plantations and the burning of their homes, and some of them were executed as traitors and rebels. According to the British view, the men of Lexington were nothing more nor less.

Compare the utterances and the deeds of the men of Alamance with those of the men of Lexington. They of Lexington instruct their representatives to demand "radical and lasting redress of their grievances." The Regulators, when promised a respectful hearing, are so sure of compliance with

their just demands that they cry "Agreed! That is all we want—liberty to make our grievances known." On the village green of Lexington free-born Americans swore "to combat manfully for their birthright inheritance of liberty." On the greensward of Alamance the Regulators, counting themselves free-born, gave full proof of their resolve "to know and enjoy the liberty which they had inherited."

Word chimes with word. Deed harmonizes with deed. The same spirit of freemen, ready to die for liberty, breathes in both. At Alamance there burst forth in a battle for right and justice the same undaunted spirit of love for freedom that afterwards flashed in the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, and later flamed at King's Mountain, at Cowpens and at Guilford Court House. Nor does it alter this fact, that some of the Regulators, forced by Tryon to take the oath of allegiance to the British government, afterward fought in the ranks of the Loyalists against their own countrymen, as some of those who had oppressed them were in the ranks of the patriot army. This is, in truth, but another argument to show that theirs was not the irresponsible temper and lawless disposition of a mob. They kept their oath out of regard to solemn obligations which they considered binding in the sight of heaven; and it is matter of history that they were promised as loyalists all the redress for which they had fought at Alamance, and under a Governor who had declared his conviction of the justice of their cause. It is matter of history also that the Presbyterians of Mecklenburg hesitated because of their oaths, when independence was proposed, and disregarded

those oaths only under the advice of their leaders. If any fact in the history of the United States is well attested, it is that the fire which flashed forth at Alamance was not quenched in the ashes of defeat. It left embers burning from which, as the years went by, there was kindled throughout Surry, Anson, Rowan and Mecklenburg and across the Alleghanies in the independent "State of Franklin," founded by refugees from the country of the Regulators, a flame of patriotic fervor which, uniting at last with the fires of Lexington and Bunker Hill, swept away the entire remnant of British power in the colonies. In the State of Franklin, the immediate offspring of the Regulation movement, independence was a fact before it was dreamed of elsewhere. In that little Commonwealth in the mountains no British flag ever waved and no officer of the British Crown ever came, and there the people, outraged and outlawed by British oppression, "set to the people of America the dangerous example of erecting themselves into a State separate and distinct from and independent of the authority" of the English Crown.

In view of all the facts, attested by cotemporary witnesses and admitted by royal Governors, we feel constrained to believe that what Bancroft says of the men of Lexington should be, in all its particulars, held applicable to the heroes of Alamance, and to them only.

"There they now stood, with arms in their hands, silent, fearless, willing to fight for their privileges, scrupulous not to begin civil war, as yet unsuspecting of danger. The ground on which they trod was the altar of freedom, and they were

to furnish the victims. They gave their lives a testimony to the rights of mankind, bequeathing to their country an assurance of success in the MIGHTY STRUGGLE WHICH THEY BEGAN."

Let us hold their names in grateful remembrance, and let the "expanding millions of their countrymen renew and multiply their praise from generation to generation."



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